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DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL ART
ACCESSIONS OF 1913

VASES AND TERRACOTTAS

THE six newly acquired vases, though few in number, are of excellent quality, and form a valuable addition to our collec-

stand out effectively from the luminous black background. The style is bold and vigorous, and the figures have a dignity and simplicity which show the painter to have been a real artist. An examination of the stylistic peculiarities, indeed, makes it possible to assign the vase to a painter who, though his name is not certainly known to us, is yet familiar from his num-

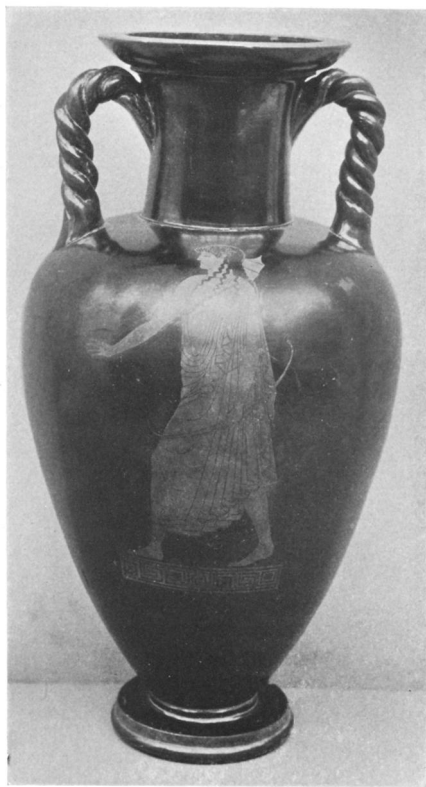
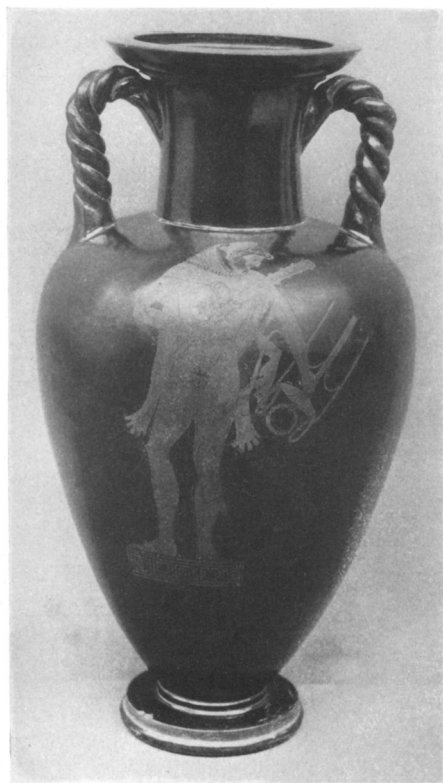


FIG. 1 ATHENIAN AMPHORA, HERAKLES AND APOLLO
FIFTH CENTURY B.C.

tion. The most important piece is a red-figured amphora with twisted handles, decorated on one side with Herakles carrying away the Delphic tripod, on the other with the pursuing Apollo (fig. 1; height, 18 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. [47.3 cm.]). There are no decorative patterns except a short band of meander under each figuré. This subordination of all details gives added prominence to the figures themselves, which

erous and distinctive works. This is the artist variously called Amasis II¹ and Kleophrades², according to which restoration is preferred of a fragmentary in-

¹See P. Hartwig, *Die griechischen Meister-schalen*, pp. 400-420.

²See J. D. Beazley, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, XXX, 1910, pp. 38-68. My thanks are due to Mr. Beazley for calling my attention to the fact that our amphora is a work by that artist.

scription on a cup in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris. More than thirty vases have already been assigned to him, and our amphora will be a worthy addition to this list. In front of Apollo is the inscription $\kappa\alpha\lambda\delta\varsigma \epsilon\iota$, "he is lovely," a form specially favored by this artist. The date of the vase may be assigned approximately to the



FIG. 2 ATHENIAN LEKYTHOS, NIKE
FIFTH CENTURY B. C.

end of the sixth or the beginning of the fifth century B. C.

Another important piece, of only slightly later date, is a red-figured lekythos (oil-jug) with a charming representation of a flying Nike (fig. 2; height, $14\frac{5}{8}$ in. [37.2 cm.]). The Goddess of Victory is depicted in her character of an attendant at a sacrifice, holding an incense-burner (thymiaterion) in her left hand. She is a dainty, graceful figure, and her garments are very

neatly drawn, with great attention to details and frequent use of diluted glaze. For vases of similar character, executed in the same charming, sensitive style and probably by the same artist, see J. D. Beazley, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, XXXIII, 1913, pp. 106-110.

An Apulian lekythos (fig. 3; height, $11\frac{1}{4}$ in. [28.6 cm.]) of the fourth century B. C. has a lifelike representation of a little girl in a swing. A woman standing behind has just pushed off the swing, while a youth in front is stretching out a hand in anticipation of giving the backward push. A boy sitting between them, holding a strigil in one hand, is perhaps awaiting his turn in the swing. The execution is not particularly good, but the artist has admirably succeeded in giving animation to his scene.

Representations of young girls swinging are not uncommon. They are sometimes interpreted as illustrations of the Aiora, a Dionysiac festival celebrated in Athens to commemorate the death of Erigone. According to the legend, when Ikaros was killed by the Athenians, his daughter Erigone searched everywhere for him. When at last she found his body, she was prostrated with grief and hanged herself. Thereupon madness struck the Athenians and many women killed themselves, likewise by hanging. The oracle was consulted and decreed that a festival should be instituted at which young girls or dolls in their stead should be swung to the music of songs recalling the wanderings of Erigone. This picturesque custom was apparently kept up in Athens, and when we find a Satyr pushing the swing, as on a Berlin vase (Furtwängler, *Vasensammlung*, No. 2589), a direct reference to the Dionysiac feast may certainly have been intended. Where there is no such reference, there is of course no reason why the scene should not represent simply a game of which the Athenian children were probably as fond as those of our own time.

A small jug with cylindrical neck and conical body, is an excellent example of Corinthian ware. The chief decoration consists of a frieze of animals and monsters, with rosettes and other ornaments in the background. The animals are very neatly

drawn, with a good deal of feeling for life-like rendering; the details are indicated by incisions, and purple is used freely as an accessory color. The period to which the vase belongs is about 650–600 B. C.

A cup in the form of a boar's head belongs to the Etruscan *Bucchero* fabric of the seventh century B. C. It is ingeniously devised, the snout of the animal forming the foot of the vase. The details are roughly indicated by incisions.

Lastly must be mentioned an Athenian fifth-century vase fashioned in the form of a duck, with a small opening at the top of the head. As a receptacle it is not very practical, but it would make a delightful toy for a child, and was probably used as such. The modeling is remarkably life-like, but the incisions outlining the feathers are roughly done and may have been re-touched in modern times.

Of the twenty-one newly acquired terracottas, fourteen form a group by themselves, having been found in one tomb, in Greece. They all represent comic actors and are therefore of peculiar interest, this being apparently the only instance of the discovery of a "company" of actors. The figures show a great variety of types and poses, but all have the conventional insignia of the comic actor, such as the mask, which is generally bearded, and the protruding stomach. The men wear trousers, a short chiton sometimes made of fur, and occasionally a mantle and cap; the women (whose parts were of course taken by men, according to the Greek custom, and who are clearly recognizable as such in our statuettes) wear long chitons and mantles. A few of the figures are identifiable with specific rôles. There is Herakles, for instance, carrying the club and wearing a lion's skin over his head and another over his shoulder, as if to make his identity doubly sure. He is no longer the mighty hero, known for his deeds of valor, but a self-conscious, grinning fellow, with his finger in his mouth. We can imagine how ludicrous such a transformation must have seemed to a Greek audience. Besides Herakles, there is an old nurse with a baby carefully wrapped in her mantle; a slave carrying a basket; and probably another

slave weeping over some maltreatment by his master. Of the others some have sly, merry expressions, others are more pensive, and one, sitting with his head on one side, looks very grave and is evidently pondering the misery of his lot. Some of the women appear to wear no masks, but it is more probable, since the custom of wear-



FIG. 3 APULIAN LEKYTHOS, GIRL IN A SWING. FOURTH CENTURY B. C.

ing them was so universal, that the masks of young women were very like real faces.

It is somewhat difficult to determine the exact period to which our statuettes belong, as grotesques naturally do not show the same stylistic development as other figures; but similar figures have been found in fourth-century graves, so that we can probably date ours in that period also. They are an echo, therefore, of the Old rather than the New Comedy, and we can

picture the actors in the plays of Aristophanes not unlike our little figures. Statuettes of actors of later date, illustrative of the New Comedy, have also been found, and are distinguishable from the earlier ones chiefly by the large funnel-shaped mouths of their masks. Whether such figures were used by children to personify actors, like the burattini in Italy, or whether they were votive offerings placed, perhaps, in an actor's grave as an appropriate memorial, we have at present no means of determining.

The seven remaining terracottas include one actor similar to those just described but not from the same tomb, two figures of Tanagra type, three from Tarentum, and one fragmentary relief probably from Sicily. The Tanagra statuettes consist of a seated woman, enveloped in her drapery, and a crouching girl, evidently playing the game of knucklebones (*ἀσπράγαλοι*), a favorite pastime of Greek girls. Both are charming creations, of exceptionally good execution, and belong to the fourth century B. C.

The three Tarentine figures are also unusually fine examples of that fabric. Two represent nude girls, probably Aphrodite, in graceful poses; the third is draped and is standing in an easy attitude with her weight on one foot and the other drawn back; considerable traces of color are preserved on the drapery. They date from the third century B. C.

The fragmentary relief represents a man reclining, leaning on his left arm. A hand resting on his right shoulder must be from another figure, so that this is evidently part of a group, either a banquet scene or a funerary subject. The style is archaic, of the sixth century B. C.

G. M. A. R.

POTS WITH HIERATIC INSCRIPTIONS

AMONG the various exhibits in The Metropolitan Museum of Art the collection illustrating Egyptian art is unique in the proportion of inscribed objects which it includes. The statement may be ven-

tured that fully one fifth of the Museum's Egyptian antiquities present longer or shorter inscriptions and the proportion would be still greater but for the prehistoric objects which antedate the common use of writing, and the amulets and beads which are too tiny to be inscribed. Some of these inscriptions are legends identifying the individual or object represented, others give the words supposed to be uttered by the persons depicted in a scene; one small stone is inscribed with medical prescriptions; a few longer inscriptions are autobiographical and still others contain fragments of poetry. But by far the largest number belong to a special class of religious texts concerned with the welfare of the dead and we shall presently consider more closely the commonest of the shorter texts of this class.

These inscriptions on Museum objects vary greatly in value. Often they are inscribed carelessly and are therefore full of mistakes which make their decipherment difficult. Not infrequently they are rather barren in content, although even the dullest lend an additional interest to the monuments bearing them. When an inscription consists only of well-known formulae, one may expect at least to learn from it the name and titles of the person for whose benefit it was written, and frequently, when archaeological evidence fails, to gain help in dating the monument on which it occurs. The inscription may fix the date of the monument in a variety of ways, as by naming the year of the reigning king, by palaeographical evidence, the drawing of its signs determining the period, and by the occurrence in it of proper names or other words or phrases of which the chronology has previously been determined.

Our Museum inscriptions render the visitor familiar with the appearance of only one kind of Egyptian writing, the hieroglyphic, in which each character is a more or less carefully drawn picture. Hieroglyphic writing goes back in its origins far beyond 3400 B. C., the approximate date of the beginning of the historic era in Egypt. In its early stages it consisted of pictographs which sufficed for the few needs for written expression of an un-